

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00724 091002Z

21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAB-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 AID-05 IGA-01

/063 W

----- 049170

R 090647Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 603

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 724

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MU

SUBJECT: SPECULATION ON CHANGES WITHIN OMAN GOVT

1. FOLLOWING LAST YEAR'S PATTERN, IT IS GENERALLY ANTICIPATED THAT CABINET AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN OMAN GOVT COINCIDENT WITH NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS NOV. 18. IMPETUS FOR CHANGE COMES FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS: DESIRE TO ENGAGE BUSINESS COMMUNITY MORE ACTIVELY IN GOVERNMENT; DELICATE TASK OF EASING OUT OR CIRCUMVENTING INEFFECTIVE OR OUT-OF-FAVOR MINISTERS; AND HYPOTHETICAL DESIRE ON PART OF SULTAN TO REVIVE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER IN FACT IF NOT IN NAME.

2. IN REVIEWING PRESENT CABINET LINE-UP AND ORGANIZATION, EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT DEFENSE AND FINANCE PORTFOLIOS SO IMPORTANT THAT SULTAN WILL CONTINUE TO HOLD THEM HIMSELF, BACKING UP WITH INTERMINISTERIAL COUNCILS AND EFFECTIVE DEPUTIES IN EACH CASE. NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL ALREADY FUNCTIONING, AND ECON ADVISER JOHN TOWNSEND TOLD EMBOFFS NOV. 6 THAT PARALLEL NATIONAL FINANCE COUNCIL SOON TO BE FORMED UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF UNSPECIFIED MINISTER. TOWNSEND STATED THAT OBJECTIVE IS MORE ACTIVELY TO ENGAGE CABINET IN FINANCIAL DECISIONS; FROM HIS OTHER REMARKS, IT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MUSCAT 00724 091002Z

SEEMS CLEAR THAT BODY WOULD MAKE AT LEAST MAJOR ALLOCATION

DETERMINATIONS, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES STILL CHARGED WITH BUDGET PREPARATION FOLLOWING FY 74 MODEL.

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT FORMATION OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MIGHT ALSO BE IN CARDS. FUNCTION WOULD BE TO DECIDE ON PROJECTS PRESENTLY UNDER PURVIEW OF MINDEVELOPMENT, AND ONE OF OBJECTIVES WOULD BE TO BYPASS INCOMPETENT MINISTER, KARIM AHMAD AL-HARAMU, (BUT PERHAPS NEW FINANCE COUNCIL DESCRIBED ABOVE SOMEHOW WOULD ASSUME THIS RESPONSIBILITY.)

4. ON QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL CABINET CHANGES, MOST VULNERABLE SEEM TO BE MINHEALTH JAMALI (WHO SEEMS TO BE OUT OF FAVOR, BUT FIGHTING TO RETAIN POSITION), MININTERIOR SAYYID HILAL BIN HAMAD AL-SAMMAR (WHO HAS NOT EXERTED STRONG LEADERSHIP) AND, LESS SO, MINDIWAN AFFAIRS SAYYID HAMAD BIN HAMUD (WHOSE LACK OF PROBITY IS ESTABLISHED FACTOR. ALTHOUGH HELD IN HIGH REGARD, MIN COMMUNICATIONS ABDUL HAFIZ RAJAB'S PERSONAL HEALTH PROBLEMS COULD RESULT IN HIS REPLACEMENT. MINEducation SAYYID FAISAL BIN ALI AL-SAID AND MININFO SAYYID FAHAD BIN MAHMUD AL-SAID ARE ON BLACK LIST OF SOME ESTABLISHMENT MEMBERS, BUT BOTH ARE EXPECTED TO RETAIN PORTFOLIOS BECAUSE OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP TO SULTAN. NAMES MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS CANDIDATES TO ENTER REFORMED CABINET INCLUDE MOHSIN DARWISH AND MOHAMMAD ZUBAIR, BOTH PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN.

5. MAINSTAYS OF PRESENT CABINET HAVE BEEN FONMIN QAIS ZAWAWI, MINCOMMUNICATIONS RAJAB, AND DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SAYYID FAHAD. EACH OF THESE (WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF RAJAB--SEE ABOVE) IS EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN, IF NOT IMPROVE ON, PRESENT POSITION AND POWER. INDEED, ZAWAWI'S STAR SEEMS PARTICULARLY TO BE ON RISE, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SCENARIO CALLS FOR HIS ELEVATION TO BECOME DE FACTO PRIME MINISTER, ALTHOUGHT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY FORMAL DESIGNATION WILL BE MADE AT THIS TIME SINCE AL BU SAID FAMILY UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT THAT. RATHER, HIS PARTICIPATION IN AND PERHAPS CHAIRMANSHIP OF INTERMINISTERIAL COUNCILS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MUSCAT 00724 091002Z

WOULD GIVE HIM INCREASED SCOPE TO PROVE SKILLS AS PREEMINENT MEMBER OF CABINET.

6. ONE LAST VARIATION IN CURRENT SPECULATION IS THAT

NEW CABINET-LEVEL POSITIONS FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND FISHERIES AND AGRICULTURE MIGHT BE CREATED OUT OF PRESENT DEPARTMENT-LEVEL ACTIVITIES WITHIN MINISTRY OF

DEVELOPMENT.

7. IF THESE
CHANGES DO TAKE PLACE, THEY WILL HAVE
SALUTORY EFFECT OF REWARDING COMPETENCE. AT SAME TIME,
ISSUE OF HOW OMAN GOVT GRACEFULLY CAN RID ITSELF
OF UNWANTED OR INEFFECTIVE ELEMENTS WOULD BE ONLY
PARTICIALLY RESOLVED AT BEST, AND SEVERAL KEY AREAS
(E.G., EDUCATION) WOULD STILL BE POORLY HANDLED.
WOLLE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MUSCAT00724
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740323-0493
From: MUSCAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741156/aaaabvrg.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 AUG 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPECULATION ON CHANGES WITHIN OMAN GOVT
TAGS: PINT, MU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005